

Sedona Community Plan Update Public Meeting
Imagine Sedona – 2020 & Beyond
Sustainability Workshop
West Sedona School Multi-Purpose Room/Cafeteria
570 Posse Ground Road, Sedona, AZ
Wednesday, October 12, 2011 - 6:00 p.m.

Public Participants (excludes those listed below): 39

Committee Members:

Chairman Jim Eaton, Vice Chairman Jon Thompson and Committee Members Mike Bower, Angela LeFevre, Barbara Litrell, Elemer Magaziner, Gerhard Mayer. Rio Robson and John Sather

Councilors:

Councilor Dennis Rayner

Commissioners:

Budget Oversight:

Lin Ennis

Housing:

Sandy Moriarty

Planning & Zoning:

Michael Hadley and Scott Jablow

Sustainability:

Brent Bitz, Sarah Irani, Marlene Rayner, Ernie Strauch and William Welter

Volunteers:

Sandy Moriarty

Staff:

Tim Ernster, Nick Gioello, Kathy Levin, John O'Brien, Donna Puckett and Mike Raber

INTRODUCTION:

The workshop began at 6:11 p.m. and Chairman Eaton welcomed the public and asked who was attending for the first time; several participants raised their hands. The Chairman then encouraged them to invite their friends and introduced the members of the Citizens Steering Committee. He expressed his appreciation for the Committee Members and indicated that they are quality folks.

Mike Raber explained that he wanted to talk about what a Community Plan is; it is our General Plan that is required by the State of Arizona and it talks about our future, what we want to be and where we do and don't want to grow. The State also requires an update of the Plan every ten years, but another reason for the update is that the Plan is a fluid document that needs to be looked at often, and the process is a large part of the Plan, because it involves so much from the community. We look to the Plan to look at changing conditions and new priorities and that is what we are doing now. We also are rethinking the direction of the Plan and this is the fourth workshop in a series of seven over the next month or so. We are beginning to transition out of the first phase of the planning process, which has been about who we are and what we look like, etc., into what we can be in the future, so during these workshops we will be looking at what we are hearing from the community and what that means in terms of community values, priorities and goals. Then, we will build on that and look for alternative futures for the community and work toward creating a common vision; hopefully, we will be doing that by the middle of next year. Our common vision will become the new Community Plan, and that will go through a public hearing process with the Planning & Zoning Commission and the City Council, but you have the final say by voting on it and that will occur in 2013, so we want to involve as many of you as we can.

Our workshop themes are based partly on what we are hearing from the community and what we have to cover in the Plan update, so tonight the theme is "Sustainability" and we have been hearing a lot about that from the community. There are several definitions for sustainability, but essentially it is about balance, meeting our needs without compromising our future generations' ability to meet their needs, but it is a wide topic that tends to be woven throughout all of the Community Plan themes.

Tonight, the Citizens Steering Committee will be working with the Sustainability Commission to conduct this workshop and there are a series of questions at each table that are focused on sustainability, and

each table will have a facilitator and recorder, so we hope to generate some discussion on those questions, and then have the recorders summarize the discussions with the whole group.

Mike Raber then introduced Brent Bitz, Chairman of the Sustainability Commission.

PRESENTATION:

Chairman Bitz thanked the participants for attending and indicated that the Sustainability Commission is quite a new Commission. He then pointed out that there is a flyer on each table that gives the Commission's Mission Statement, a listing of some of the programs that the Commission is working on, plus information regarding the time and location of the Commission's meetings. Chairman Bitz then introduced the following members of the Commission who were present: Vice Chairman Ernie Strauch and Commissioners Sarah Irani, Marlene Rayner, William Welter and Council Liaison Dennis Rayner.

Chairman Bitz explained that what we are trying to do this evening is bring forward ideas from the community. It is not the intention of the Commission to try to impose mandates about sustainability; we are trying to find out what the community wants, and then through the Commission try to find ways to facilitate turning those ideas into reality. There is a wide definition of sustainability and each of you probably has your own. When the Council was creating the Commission, there were a number of definitions that they came across, and he remembers a couple of them. One is, "Sustainability is improving the quality of human life while living within and caring for passively supporting ecosystems", which is obviously very environmentally focused. Another definition is, "Sustainability is based upon simple principles; everything that we need for survival and well-being depends directly or indirectly on our natural environment. Sustainability creates and maintains the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in a productive harmony that permits fulfilling the social, economic and other requirements for present and future generations", so in that definition you heard "social" and "economic", and both have broad implications.

Chairman Bitz then stated that he would like to throw out one little reflection on sustainability and that is sustainable ideas for the City of Sedona are those that can help all of us preserve the wonderful environment, enhance our wise use of resources and improve our community, so that we leave a better place for our descendents. The key is that we are focusing on what the citizens of Sedona can do for ourselves and for our community, so if for example, we think that a sustainable idea might be a cure for Cancer, that probably isn't something that is a practical part of our Community Plan, but if we look at the questions provided that the facilitator will take you through, those questions tend to focus on our community. The Chairman then read the following questions:

- Visualizing Sedona in the future as a model sustainability community, what would it look like? What attributes would a "sustainable Sedona" have?
- What sustainability initiatives or goals are important to you personally? We really want your feedback of what you think is key and not what you think other people think is important.
- What are the top five sustainable issues or topics the City should focus on?
- What should be the overarching goals to help Sedona be a more sustainable place to live and work?

Chairman Bitz then stated that we are hoping to focus on what Sedonans can do for ourselves; for example, what might we want to do about designing and implementing land use policies, which have to do with building density or building height or how we develop 89A? Or, we might want to talk about traffic and circulation; we all know that there was a local shuttle that has been disbanded for lack of use, but what does that mean for us and what do we want as alternatives? How do we deal with parking for all of the visitors that come here and how can we encourage people to walk and bike around the community? How do we deal with the transportation and traffic issues? What about the fact that we live in a region called the Verde Valley; we don't just live in an isolated little world and maybe things that we do impact the communities around us, like the Village of Oak Creek, so what sustainability issues should we work on in tandem with other communities to make the Verde Valley a better place to live and a more sustainable place?

Chairman Bitz then asked what local resources are important; how should we treat recycling and waste management, hazardous materials, etc., these are all kinds of things that you might want to discuss. You

might want to talk about economic sustainability; you all know what the economy is doing and there may be issues that you feel are very important and need to be incorporated into the discussions this evening. It is all about what you want to talk about; the questions at each table are all the same and they are only intended to stimulate discussion, so it is all about sort of the field of dreams of what you would like to see in the Plan. The Chairman then indicated that the audience could begin their discussions at the tables.

PARTICIPANTS' BREAKOUT TABLE DISCUSSIONS:

The participants began their breakout table discussions at 6:25 p.m. and concluded at 7:30 p.m.

CLOSING:

Vice Chairman Thompson indicated that there was a lot of interesting discussion going on about where sustainability can play a role and that is terrific. He then explained that each recorder will give a summary of the discussion at each table, and he wanted the audience to know that all comments get recorded. They are typed into a document that the Committee can research and use for the Committee's work later on, so nothing will be lost. Additionally, he pointed out that other tables may have discussed the same idea, so the recorder can just note that your table also discussed that point, without having to go into as much detail. The Vice Chairman then asked Brent Bitz to start with his summary.

Brent Bitz indicated that he would just hit four points from their wonderful discussion. First is the need for economic sustainability and the idea was like the business incubator in Flagstaff called NACET (Northern Arizona Center for Emerging Technologies) and that has a lot of broad implications. Second is that we need to develop a regional water plan, because water is not just a local resource under Sedona; we have to recognize the rest of the Verde Valley and that over time they may access the water that we tend to think of as ours, because it is running under the City, so we need a regional water plan. Third, we need to preserve or enhance the architectural beauty of Sedona, and by way of things we don't want to see for example, there are some fairly old ugly, new bank and other signs that didn't add anything to this community, as opposed to the days when we had McDonald's do something with their yellow sign, so we need to enhance and strengthen the architectural efforts where possible. And lastly, we need an urban trail system that will perhaps be a loop that goes around 89A in West Sedona, so that citizens can walk and bike in a safe environment, because no one believed that any type of bike lane on 89A, even with dedicated bike lanes, is ultimately the solution. There needs to be some kind of integrated pathway to circle 89A through West Sedona and possibly the string of pearls concept will be like little community stops, etc.

Mike Bower indicated that for the first question, visualizing -- sustainability is not an accessory, it is a way of life, so we talked about an eco-friendly, low-carbon footprint tourism and creating some alternatives to tourism economically to enhance economic sustainability; creating business partnership endeavors with schools; fuel, food, biomass, all vacant land used for food production; water harvesting, wind and solar; more people on foot would be seen when you visualize the future; buses running on bio-fuels; public education on a lot of nations has been accomplished. As human resources are also an important part of sustainability, there would be a teaching center for community nurturing; vertical greenhouses produce local food and they exhibit flexibility to adapt to changing conditions; dirt tracks for horses, bikes and walking to move around the community; not one plastic bag or plastic water bottle is in sight, and we would need a diverse community with diverse lifestyles, diverse housing with a bit more density, and neighborhoods have changed to allow multi-family use. All lodging charges a \$5.00 surcharge and visitors get a reusable bag with stuff in it to guide their visitor experience; there is the need for visitor education as well. In fact, visitation will be more like part-time residents, because with travel becoming more costly, folks will stay much longer and participate in volunteerism, education, etc. On question two, set-up charity to raise food supplies; these are just some personal objectives: food bank users volunteer to sell raffle tickets; we need a re-vision on transportation, because autos won't last and we need flexibility in the system. Give alternative transportation the ability to cross Red Rock Crossing; get lots of food production going locally; get alternative fuel back-ups for water company pumps; use marcite clay purified water; educate to facilitate a lifestyle change; reduce refuse; sustainability is the new sustainability. Create a Sedona sustainability standard; the City creates its own water in clay pots to starve out the plastic bottle industry. Create sandbag houses without any loans.

Mike Bower indicated that on question three, they gave it their five best: water and food; conservation and waste production; education; energy, and transportation and circulation. On question four, test where we are today regarding sustainability; have a community fire drill, in other words, shut Sedona's power off for three days and that will show our level of sustainability. Do a similar experiment and close the banks for at least five days to see how fast we stabilize. You don't look for your flashlight until the lights go out; people learn by crisis. Another goal is create flexibility in all of our endeavors. Another goal is create a sustainable standard for businesses, buildings and neighborhoods. Another goal is procure all food within a 150-mile radius.

John Sather indicated that his table was a bicycle-centered group, so the idea of it being easier for people to walk around; the idea of short hops up Cook's Hill, because if you don't have to climb to the top, for the bike-minded group, there would be more bikes. The idea of centering planning around three hubs and they themselves become sustainable, and that might be Uptown, West Sedona, and VOC might expand regionally to a place like Cottonwood, and those hubs work within themselves much like airport hubs work. Transportation needs to carry bicycles, once again for some of the hill issues, and some of this is paired with parking, so we have more park and rides; the idea of shared bicycles. When doing the plan, focus on pedestrian and bicycle overlays that are very well thought out. The City needs to put more focus in plan reviews on pedestrians and bicycles; more incentive to recycle, we are not doing enough; citywide composting programs, and the idea of more neighborhood pick-up points, so we are not all either waiting for Waste Management or driving to the recycle center. Then, the whole idea of fostering creativity in recycling, so we can reuse some of the materials for ourselves, and education for sustainability and conferences on sustainability. Begin to help new people who come here learn how to build for the Sedona climate and understand our local microclimate. Focus on the fact that sustainability and the economy are very tied together; the idea of focusing on local businesses. The idea that maybe flexibility in zoning is more important than people realize and how that opens up a lot of ability to create more sustainability – such as the idea of some singular things like adjusting the LRV within the City so we aren't so focused on everything blending in and we are looking more at a balance of the energy use of a house, which may include things like white roofs. Revisit the Building Code, ban black cars like California; use more permeable surfaces. We seem to do a lot of xeriscaping, but we may not be doing enough. Maintain the quality of our water, so we can drink it and not use bottled water. Have a single point on sustainability, a citywide Sustainability Coordinator, so beyond the Commission, it is more funneled down to a single person to help understand the whole nature of sustainability -- things as simple as providing bike parking.

John O'Brien indicated he is not going to go over number one; he has a couple of pages of notes for that and he will give those to Vice Chairman Thompson later. He is going to focus on numbers 3 and 4; the top five sustainability issues are water conservation; converting to renewable energy; public transportation, reducing or eliminating vehicular congestion; increased locally-grown food as part of our overall food consumption; and community engagement and commitment to the sustainability concept. Their very specific goals on number four were: Going from last to first in water conservation by the year 2020, because right now as a community, Sedona is last; becoming a zero-waste community by 2020; have 20% of energy consumption come from renewable sources by 2020; reduce traffic at the "Y" roundabout by 20% by 2020; increase Verde Valley-wide food consumption of Verde Valley-grown products to 20% of total consumption by 2020, and have sustainability-themed curriculum implemented in the Sedona School District for grades K-12 by 2020.

Gerhard Mayer indicated that they have as a headline, "Sustain not Drain". People were asking about some stuff that was implemented and has had great success in Europe, which was a coin-operated bike rental. You put a coin in and it releases the bike to get around. The wastewater outside of Sedona could be used for more economic stuff, like farming, than adding some recycled wetlands, which are going to be implemented for bird watching, so there is a lot more use for that piece of land, but nothing was named specifically. The interest is to become a green community with zero energy and we should have an educational campus that teaches sustainability and that could be done with Yavapai College. The impact of traffic is a big issue, and there were suggestions to put parking meters in Uptown and force people to go into a public underground parking garage; have a park and ride for all employees of the City and hospitality industry, and have a car-free day where people put a sticker on their windshield and volunteer

to not drive their car on that particular day. Instead of using plastic or paper shopping bags, use bags with the City of Sedona logo on them, so people can take that bag with them as a souvenir. A big part would be educating the public about sustainability. For water conservation, instead of plastic water bottles, have drinking stations. Have a green Building Code, which is affordable for people that actually decide to go green, and make up the higher cost by reducing the permitting or impact fees. Another topic was that we have so many garbage collection companies running the same route, polluting the neighborhoods and impacting neighborhood streets, we should be organizing trash collection. Periodically have a de-clutter day when we can put out things like mattresses, etc., and the City picks it up, as well as hazmat collection, like paint, etc. Another idea would be rainwater collection to be reused on their own homes or for the neighbors, and retention ponds to control flooding and replenish the watershed. A creek walk would be great for people who live here, and it would be a great thing to have connections between neighborhoods, so we don't have to walk on the highway. Make Sedona a healthy City.

Mike Raber indicated he would just hit some of the highlights. One thing that came up on the first question, which was the attributes of a sustainable Sedona, was controlling our own utility functions and not having big corporations subsidize their income by selling their energy to other places, so we have a smaller utility structure that might serve the Verde Valley for instance, and not using large tracts of land for alternate energy. However, there was a difference of opinion on that, and the other opinion was that maybe we should look at all of the large areas of land we have surrounding us, for a possible site for solar energy. Verde Valley communities need to work together as one community to make some of these things happen. Encourage good ideas from our community to help us realize self-sufficiency, and we need to pursue getting younger voices to the table on all of these things. We need to address the sustainability of people, rather than just talking about green building codes. It is not just about going green, everyone that attends these tends to be older, but the world of the future belongs to the youth. We need a youth core and the high school should send young people to these tables; we shouldn't be just going out, but go where they are. We need to pay close attention to our current Community Plan vision and use that seriously when we are looking at things like solar arrays and other infrastructure. Preservation of natural beauty should be in the forefront of our decision-making, as part of that Vision Statement. We can grow just about anything in this area; we have some of the best land around and we need to make sure of that expertise, because we could end up having much more focus on farming in this area and tapping into people that want to do those things, because we have such a great pool of people who know what is going on and have the skills for that. We need to focus on which areas of growth will be sustained and be somewhat realistic about the fact that we are a tourist community and we should look to other communities that have capitalized on that, and as one of our big resources, we could do more to do that. We need to do more to encourage our education capacity in this area, but it is always going to be a tough place for people to get jobs, so focusing on the industries that are successful and that we have are one of the key things.

Mike Raber added that regarding question 3, one of the top things that the community should focus is water conservation; we may need to change our thinking in terms of consumption. We need to focus on education, because it does change behavior, and the City should do as much as it can to educate on conservation, and that is probably where we will be more successful than in trying to pass new regulations. How can we learn to reduce consumption as a community to deal with slower growth? We had a lot of discussion and it centered on the fact that we are slow growing, but how can we learn to be sustainable within that slow growth pattern? Expanding Yavapai College and programs that they have can help strengthen the economic engine -- experiential learning for youth with the older very skilled residents being part of that and linking that to the college. We are a perfect community for new ideas, with synergy between the older skilled people and our youth. Lastly, we should focus on a commitment to acquire a specific amount of creek frontage for public access, because that is one way to really build on our tourism economy.

Elemer Magaziner indicated that they started with multi-use pathways and these were mainly ideas. We also talked about water capture of the floods and rain to use it more slowly. One of the basic themes at the table was to sustain the people, as Mike mentioned, and he wrote down that we suffer together if things get bad. We need community centers to sustain the social fabric, and preserve Sedona's unique

natural ecology. Walkable, compact, self-sufficient in energy; we shouldn't have to drive our cars. We should be self-sufficient in food and water, and we need to teach each other about these things to make it happen, because these are accomplished through mutual efforts. We are interdependent within the region, but we should be independent from the outside for critical resources. One really cool thing that happened was to look at sustainability in terms of rights of the individual; we have the right to not be poisoned and we have a right not to be hungry, so approach the whole sustainability theme from the point of view of our rights as human beings, and then eventually what is the ideal beyond those rights? We also need to meet the needs of the tourists. In terms of their biggest aggravations, which are parking and taxes, because these things won't sustain businesses, we need some incentives for green building and for educating those people how to do green building that want to do it. Watershed protection again was mentioned and somebody wanted a bypass through the "Y", so we don't have to go through that area. There is a stress on having multi-age community centers, where people of all ages and different interests gather, and to be a City that encourages social dialogue on community issues, so on issues that never go away and continue to be a problem, we need to encourage discussion on those. Energy independence is tied to water independence, etc., and we have an interest in a local currency where we try to separate money from housing and other needs, so that we concentrate more on value-added to each other, instead of money, and the places that we add value are in goods, services and ideas. We want to concentrate on those things, and maybe we should all hoard silver and gold. We need green building codes and they should be started with the businesses first, and then trickle down to individual homes. Security needs to be approached as a regional effort and regional doesn't mean the Verde Valley; it means Northern Arizona. Attract young people to be interested in food security and the other issues having to do with sustainability, so they will come here and do it or study it -- Sedona being a learning center for sustainability. And at the very end, the most important to sustainability is the community effort; it is not something that is done by experts or special interest groups.

Vice Chairman Thompson indicated that was awesome and asked for applause for three groups of people; all of the recorders that did such a terrific job with their summary; all of the facilitators from the Sustainability Commission and all of you -- thank you very much. It is times like this when he sees the caring that happens; this is a great town to find out who really cares. Not only that you come, but that you care so deeply about these things that are not only going to affect you, but your kids and future generations, and he is very proud to be living in the same City as all of you, so thank you very much.

Vice Chairman Thompson then indicated that there is another one of these meetings next week on Tuesday and it starts at 4:00 p.m. at the Sedona Community Center. The topic of that is parks & recreation, and like this one, we are doing it in collaboration with the Parks & Recreation Commission, so it will be very interesting to get some input on our park system. Two weeks from tonight is the Housing session and that will be at St. Andrews Episcopal Church, on Wednesday the 26th at 6:00 p.m., and he has a lot of housing comments from the sustainability standpoint that we can bring back and chew on some more, so come to those meetings and bring a friend. He then explained the "party-in-a-box", including the contents and how they can be used, and if interested, Kathy Levin is the person to contact.

The workshop ended at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Donna A. S. Puckett, *Recording Secretary*

Date